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Question Time: Time for a new national anthem?

If you had to pick a new one, what would it be?

By Rob Burgess
Tribune night editor

[**Editor's note**: To participate in future queries, keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook accounts.]

Exactly two hundred years ago this September, Francis Scott Key wrote the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner" to commemorate the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812. In 1931, it officially became our country's national anthem. Most people seem to be fine with this, but others would prefer something different. So, this July 4th weekend, we wanted to know: "If you had to pick a replacement for 'The Star-Spangled Banner' as our national anthem, what song would you pick and why?" To accommodate more answers, we're tweaking the Question Time format again this week.

Leave it alone

"I would never change it, but I wish there was a standard required for singing it — not up for interpretation!" — **Sue Deakin Flasche**

“I would never consider changing it.” — **Renate Sharp**

“What is wrong with what we have?” — **Mary Geneva Hunter**

“There is no replacement!” — **Jason Fisher**

“They need to leave well enough alone.” — **Jessica Seagrave**

Change it

“Lee Greenwood – ‘God Bless the USA.’ And, no, I’m not a religious person, but I love the song.” — **Di Anna Lawhead**

“John Lennon – ‘Imagine.’” — **Dustin Ogle**

“Irving Berlin – ‘God Bless America.’” — **Dick Moser**

“Katharine Lee Bates and Samuel A. Ward – ‘America the Beautiful.’ I have always thought it should be our national anthem. No person ever sings our current national anthem correctly, and if they do sing it correctly, they forget the words.” — **Jeff McKee**

“Toby Keith – ‘Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American.)’ Hypothetically speaking, of course.” — **Jessica Shell Bradley**

Our answers

“James Newton Howard - ‘Horn of Plenty.’ [It’s] from ‘The Hunger Games.’ It’s the Panem national anthem and Panem is pretty much the United States anywhere from 100 to 999 years from now, according to Suzanne Collins. It also sounds cooler than ‘The Star-Spangled Banner.’” — **Hillarie Hazelton**

“America the Beautiful” — **Lori A. Thomas**

“America the Beautiful” — **Robin Harper**

“There’s not that many songs that would be options. But it’d be ‘God Bless America’ because it sounds so good, it’s a big song with opportunity for big, uplifting notes. However, I’d strongly consider Lee Greenwod’s [‘God Bless the USA’] because it has similar spine-tingling qualities. Most national anthems from other countries lack that emotional swell that those two songs have.” — **Pedro Velazco**

“Some people act as if it’s treasonous to suggest a replacement for ‘The Star-Spangled Banner,’ but our country survived for its first 155 years

without it (or any other song) being our national anthem, so it’s not as if it’s written into the Constitution or anything. Personally, I’m so ready for a change from ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’: It’s about war, it’s hard to sing and people get way too much leeway putting their own spin on it. My choice would be: Woody Guthrie – ‘This Land Is Your Land.’ Besides being much easier to croon, it’s also a message I can get behind. It’s a good reminder that this country is for everyone, not just an elite few. This will probably never happen, but while we’re at it, we may as well restore two of the more political, earlier verses to the song: ‘There was a big, high wall there that tried to stop me; A sign was painted said: Private Property; But on the back side it didn’t say nothing; This land was made for you and me.’ And: ‘In the squares of the city, in the shadow of a steeple; By the relief office, I’d seen my people; As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking; Is this land made for you and me?’ Now, that sounds more like America to me. But, let’s be honest: Any song played as often as a country’s national anthem will grow tiresome no matter how great the song is to begin with. I’m sure if I actually got my way it’d only take a few months for me to start wishing for a new anthem.” — **Rob Burgess**

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